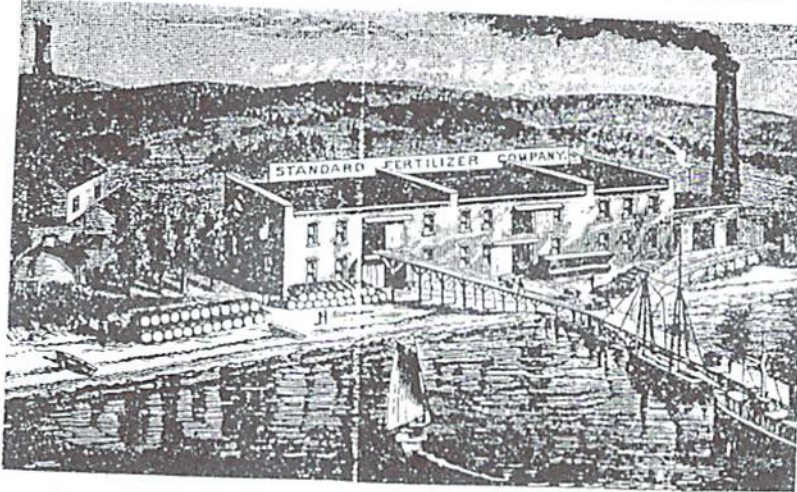


ONE OF DUXBURY'S EARLY INDUSTRIES



There's an interesting story connected with some of the buildings on the 5-acre waterfront property Louis Lemieux owns on Crescent St.

The story begins with Capt. Isaac Drew, who leased "the wealthy Drew house" to Jacob Seaver. Jacob lived in this house (now razed, but part of the stone cellar remains) while he built and operated the Porgy Factory. Here Jacob Seaver ground up porgy for use as fertilizer.

Objections

According to Mrs. Warren Wentworth, the town historian, this porgy factory, called "The Standard Fertilizer Company," was built around 1880. According to H. B. Fisher in his unpublished *History of Duxbury*, "some Boston and Brookline people" objected to the stench that came from the plant when the wind was southeast or dormant, but at a Town Meeting in 1885 the business was approved and was declared not to be a public nuisance. The Brookliners were

persistent, however, and Jacob Seaver, who had been "hailed into court on the charge of maintaining a public nuisance," finally yielded.

"The owner," says Fisher, "thought discretion was the better part of valor, and not wishing to war on the fair sex, discontinued the manufacture of fertilizer and commenced the manufacture of odorless paint, but the freight rates and other matters obliged him to remove to other parts, leaving a big factory that had cost him \$150,000." *Cherchez la femme!* The complaining women won. At this point there is scarcity of fact. But former employees of the boneblack factory tell us that when the business moved to Chelsea, Mercer Seaver, who was a brother of Jacob, Latimer and Susan Seaver, was operating the business. When did the porgy factory become a boneblack plant?

In 1894, says Mrs. Wentworth, Jacob Seaver is listed in a

directory of Duxbury as a manufacturer of ivory black. Some time between 1885 and 1894 the porgy factory was discontinued.

The porgy were caught in huge seines. Several men manipulating them could stretch them from one side of Eagle's Nest to the other. There was a wooden pier extending west from the granite pier (still standing) to the channel, and here the porgy boats landed the fish, and later, boneblack. At low tide you can still see the ribs of a fishing boat abandoned off the pier.

The big chimney on the porgy factory (shown in the cut) was still standing 65 years ago, and when Walter Smith bought the property the porgy factory was much larger than his present shellfish building.

What Are They?

Not uncommon on the site are polished, smooth, flint-colored stones slightly smaller than a golf ball. Some say they were used to grind up porgy so oil could be extracted, but Walter Smith and others were sure they were used to pulverize the soot used in the manufacture of boneblack. In 1913 Smith tore down a building about 40-ft. square and 60-ft. high that was used in the manufacture of boneblack. He says the boneblack (used in paint) was blown from the "porgy factory" building into this building, which was lined with shelves and was packaged. Mrs. William Howland of Chestnut St. remembers seeing George Peterson's face covered with soot when he came home from work.

Later Walter Smith used the original "porgy factory" building, after many alterations, as a shellfish plant.

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